

methods during 1999. This enabled small populations of sea rocket and prickly saltwort to colonise areas where residual algal deposits were left undisturbed. The result was that sand dart larvae recolonised almost immediately and were found to be abundant, even in areas where only a few plants had colonised the strandline.

However, such rapid recolonisation is only likely to occur where there are extant populations close by, in this case the population at Crymlyn Burrows undoubtedly facilitated rapid recolonisation. This example does demonstrate that with sympathetic management, it is possible for local authorities (and other land-managers) to accommodate both human interests and those of the strandline fauna without compromising health and safety, tourism and other key issues. Sensitive areas elsewhere in the UK should be identified and damaging activities minimised if sustainable populations of the sand dart and other scarce species are to remain features of our beaches.

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#### SHORT COMMUNICATION

**More observations of dotted chestnut moths.**—I recently reported finding adult dotted chestnut moths, *Conistra rubiginea* D & S., in the nest of the ant *Lasius fuliginosus* (Latr.) (Formicidae); see Denton (1998. An unusual encounter with dotted chestnut moths *Conistra rubiginea*. *British Journal of Entomology and Natural History* **10** (4): 209). I revisited the same nest on Thursley NNR, Surrey on 4.ix.1998, and found two lepidopteran pupae next to the nest carton, c.40 cm below ground inside the base of a hollow oak. I took these home and adult *C. rubiginea* emerged on the 25. & 29.ix.

*L. fuliginosus* is a fairly large ant, but workers rarely bring large insects to the nest. However, it does defend its nest against intruders, and the caterpillars must have a way of pacifying or avoiding the workers on their way down into the nest. The adults found within the nest in 1997 were completely ignored by the ants, which were agitated by my presence.

Further investigation of this colony in 1999 revealed several old pupae deep in the nest chamber but no evidence of larvae. The caterpillars of *C. rubiginea* are very hairy, unlike others in the genus and it is tempting to suggest that it might be myrmecophilous, as its range is within that of *L. fuliginosus*. Both favour woodland, and wooded heaths. In captivity the larvae are not very fussy about their food plant, and will eat withered leaves. Perhaps the caterpillar is somehow protected by the ants, which offsets the need for a continual supply of fresh vegetation. It is surprising that others, especially the arch ant-nest investigator Horace Donisthorpe, didn't come across this moth in the many nests examined across the country.—JONTY DENTON, 2 Sandown Close, Alton, Hants GU34 2TG